

that Pletcher is not prior art to the above-identified patent application. That is, the above-identified patent application is a continuation-in-part of International Application No. PCT/US92/04263 which was filed May 20, 1992 and which provides support for Claims 13, 14, and 17-21 (e.g., Figs. 3B, 6B). The filing date of Pletcher is May 6, 1993. Therefore, since Applicants' priority date precedes the filing date of Pletcher, Pletcher is not prior art. Claims 13, 14, and 17-21 are allowable.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 24, 25, and 27, which depend from independent Claim 15, under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based upon the combination of Merkel and Pletcher. Again, Pletcher is not prior art to the above-identified patent application. That is, the above-identified patent application is a continuation-in-part of International Application No. PCT/US92/04263 which was filed May 20, 1992 and which provides support for Claims 24, 25, and 27 (e.g., Figs. 3B, 6B, 7A-B). The filing date of Pletcher is May 6, 1993. Therefore, since Applicants' priority date precedes the filing date of Pletcher, Pletcher is not prior art.

Applicants have amended independent Claim 15 to include the limitation that the auxiliary slot may be positioned on the mesial and/or distal side of the bracket. That is, independent Claim 15 have been amended to emphasize an additional feature directed to the position of the slot(s) such as those referenced in dependent Claims 24, 25, and 27 noted above. Claim 15 and all claims depending therefrom are allowable.

In the Office Action, the Examiner requested correction of certain informalities with regard to Claim 21 and 30. Applicants have complied with this request.

Based upon the foregoing, all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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